

Community Assistantship Program

Milaca Community Library Needs Assessment/Feasibility Study

The Community Assistantship Program is made possible by the generous support of the McKnight Foundation, the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Southern Initiative Fund, the Initiative Foundation, the Southwest Minnesota Foundation, the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and the West Central Initiative Fund. Within the University of Minnesota, support is provided by Central Administration, the Rural Development Council, the College of Human Ecology, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the College of Natural Resources, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, the Carlson School of Management, the Center for Small Towns, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, and the five Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships.

Milaca Community Library Needs Assessment/Feasibility Study

Conducted on behalf of
Milaca Friends of the Library

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January 2000

CAP Report 026

CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Humphrey Center**

January, 2000

The Community Assistantship Program (CAP) supported the work of the author of this report but has not reviewed it for publication. The content is solely the responsibility of the author and is not necessarily endorsed by CAP.

CAP is a cross-college, cross-campus University of Minnesota initiative coordinated by The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. CAP is supported by grants from The McKnight Foundation and The Initiative Fund of Southeast and South Central Minnesota. CAP receives support from the following units at the University of Minnesota: the Office of the Vice President and Provost, the Rural Development Council, the Experiment in Rural Cooperation, the NE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, the College of Human Ecology, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the College of Natural Resources, the College of Education and Human Development, the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Development within the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, the College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

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Executive Summary of project

Purpose of the project

The Milaca Community Library Needs Assessment/Feasibility Study was undertaken to determine the size of the Milaca Community Library in comparison to other libraries in order to see if it was undersized, oversized, or average. Cost information and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) recommendations for a new library construction were compiled, and a community survey was done to determine public awareness and support for a new library.

Size Comparison

The first task was to evaluate the current status of the Milaca Community Library, and compare it to other libraries to see if the current size and number of resources were reasonable. Square footage data was compiled from libraries serving populations of 7000-8000 people, which is the category the Milaca Community Library falls under (7787 people). Data was also gathered from the East Central Regional Library System to compare the Milaca Community Library to others in the same system. Through the data analysis, it was determined that the Milaca Community Library has the lowest square footage per capita of all libraries in the state of Minnesota serving populations of 7000-8000 people. It was also discovered that the Milaca Community Library has the second lowest square footage per capita within the East Central Regional Library System.

Next, data was compiled on library materials per capita. The Milaca Community Library again came in last among the 7000-8000 people group, and came in last within the East Central Regional Library System as well.

Cost and construction

Data was gathered about cost of construction for new libraries. Libraries constructed in the state of Minnesota in the last six years were examined to determine the cost per square foot for construction. The data ranged from \$84/square foot to \$145/square foot, with the \$145 estimate being the most recent one given.

Next, the space needed was considered. Comparing average sizes for libraries serving 7000-8000 people as well as the libraries in the ECRL, it was determined that the equivalent size needed for a new library in Milaca would be between 3660 and 5451 square feet.

In addition to that information, ADA building requirements were examined, and key points were highlighted for inclusion in the report, as considerations when looking at sites for a new library, and as construction concerns.

Community Survey

The other major part of the project was to do a community survey to determine community awareness and use of the library, as well as community support for a new library (and for taxation to pay for the new library). A survey was taken of 100 residents of the Milaca Community Library service area, which consists Milaca, Milo, Borgholm, Bogus Brook, Hayland, Pease, Foreston, Bock, Page, Dailey, and Mudgett Townships. Participants were randomly selected from the telephone book, and evening and weekend calls were made in an attempt to collect responses.

100 surveys were collected in approximately a one month period from residents of the above mentioned communities. Results were compiled, and a summary of the outcomes is listed below:

- 70% of those surveyed had been to the Milaca Community Library.
- 27% of those who had been to the Milaca Community Library at some point had not been within the last 12 months. 40% had been 1-4 times in the last 12 months, 11% had been 5-9 times in that time frame, 10% had been 10-19 times, and 3% had been over 20 times.
- When asked to rate the number of materials in the Milaca Community Library, 11% said it was very good, 29% said it was good, 26% said it was fair, 10% said it was poor, and 0% said it was very poor.
- When asked to rate the size of the Milaca Community Library building, 0% said it was very good, 13% said it was good, 29% said it was fair, 29% said it was poor, and 7% said it was very poor.

- Of those surveyed, 29% had gone outside of the Milaca area to use a library. 62% of those people said it was because the other library had a better selection of materials.
- 85% of those surveyed supported the idea of expanding the Milaca Community Library. 3% did not support the idea, 11% didn't know, and 1% said maybe.
- 51% of those surveyed would consider making a donation to support library expansion. 30% said no, 2% didn't know, and 17% said maybe.
- 42% surveyed said they would consider supporting a levy or small tax increase to help fund a new library. 31% said no, 8% didn't know, and 18% said maybe.

PART I: Purpose, objectives, and background

Purpose of the assessment/study

The purpose of this study was to analyze library size data within the state of Minnesota, and compare the Milaca Community Library with other libraries in the region as well as with other libraries serving populations of similar size. A survey was done to analyze the use and opinion of the Milaca Community Library, the community's use of other libraries, and the public awareness/support of library expansion in order to encourage informed decision making and community planning.

Objectives

The objectives of the Milaca Community Library Needs Assessment/Feasibility Study as laid out by the Milaca Friends of the Library were as follows:

1. Gather, verify and compile data on;
 - a. Square footage required to offer services similar to nearby towns of similar size
 - b. Safety and access requirements for new library space
 - c. Regional library resources available to the branch when adequate space is found
 - d. Average cost for constructing new library space
 - e. Types of financial support available

2. Survey residents and community groups of the Milaca area to assess;
 - a. Community support for expanded library space and services
 - b. Community awareness of the space needs issue
 - c. Willingness of taxpayers to fund expansion
 - d. Number of residents going outside the community for library services
 - e. What kinds of services residents would expect a library expansion to make available.

Background of the Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support the Milaca Community Library and help it expand its potential to serve the Milaca area and provide materials for education and enjoyment. Their purpose is to build and maintain an association of persons interested in access to library services, information, and information technology, focus public attention on and raise awareness of library services, facilities, and needs, especially the urgent space needs. They will also provide programming that encourages literacy and library use for all ages, act as an advocate for appropriate support from government at all levels, and continue to develop cooperative relationships with community organizations.¹

Background of the situation and area

Milaca is known as the gateway to Mille Lacs County. Located approximately one hour north of the twin cities, it is a rural area with lots of outdoor recreational opportunities. The area has a small-town feel, but it is conveniently located near several major metropolitan areas.

The Milaca Community Library is located in downtown Milaca, and serves the areas of Milaca, Milaca Township, Pease, Foreston, Bock, Dailey Township, Mudgett Township, Page Township, Hayland Township, Borgholm Township, half of Milo Township, and half of Bogus Brook Township.

The estimated population of this area in 1999 was 7787 people. According to the United States Census Bureau², the Mille Lacs County population is increasing –

¹ Milaca Friends of the Library, Mission Statement, 9/1/00.

² www.census.gov, 9/28/00.

from an estimated 21,067 people to an estimated 21,350 people from 1998 to 1999 – a change of 1.3 percent.

Background of the Milaca Community Library

The Milaca Community Library is part of the East Central Regional Library System. The ECRL provides staffing and library resources, but the city of Milaca is responsible for providing the physical space for its library branch. The ECRL is a consolidated regional library system, which means there is one central source of income primarily supplied by the counties, with a bit of state and federal funding included. The ECRL provides the materials, the librarian's salary, telephone and computer access, etc. The city is responsible for the actual building, the heat, lights, cleaning, yard maintenance, etc.

The libraries in the ECRL do not have identical listings of books, which is beneficial for inter-library lending. There is a van which runs between all of the libraries four times a week, and which transfers books on hold as well as books that are routinely exchanged to keep the libraries replenished with "fresh" material. Every three weeks there is a rotation of a large number of books, and quarterly there is an exchange of audiovisual materials.

All books funnel through Cambridge, which is the headquarters of the ECRL. Cambridge also houses all of the "home office" staff such as the director, assistant director, and reference librarian of the ECRL.

The ECRL also has the ability to loan books from other libraries such as the St. Paul public library and the University of Minnesota; this is coordinated from Cambridge as well.

Estimated Population Changes

According to the US Census Bureau³, the population of the Milaca Library service area is changing, and all but one particular area is estimated to be increasing in population size.

The US Census Bureau posted data from the 1990 census specific to cities and townships, as well as 1998 estimates of population in those same areas. Milaca, Milo, Pease, Page, Mudgett, Hayland, Bogus Brook, Borgholm, Dailey and Foreston all showed population increases in that 8 year span of approximately 13% (range 12.9% - 13.6%). Only Bock showed a decrease in population of approximately 1.7% during that time span. For a graphical representation of the data, see Appendix A.

³ www.census.gov, 9/29/00.

In addition to that data, the whole of Mille Lacs County is expanding in population, at a faster rate than the state of Minnesota. The Census Bureau compared 1997 and 1998 population data estimates for Mille Lacs County and the state of Minnesota, which showed that the increase in population of Mille Lacs County was 1.3% in that year, while in the state it was 1.0%.

While this does not necessarily mean that the library will see an increase in users, it does mean that more people are moving or being born into the area and there are more potential library users than before.

Library Users in the area

According to 1998 data kept by the Milaca Community Library, there is a total of 2263 individuals registered for library cards as of 6/16/98. That is approximately 29% of the estimated population of the area served by the Milaca Community Library. However, there are likely quite a few library users that have not registered for library cards, or have cards that have expired. The library card data should not be an accurate indicator of the number of people that have actually ever been to the library, but would be better suited to estimate the percentage of regular library users.

Part II: Library Comparisons

Square Footage Per Capita

A comparison was made among libraries in the state of Minnesota serving populations of 7000 – 8000 people, as well as among the member libraries in the East Central Regional Library System.⁴

In the 7000-8000 population size comparison, the other libraries used were: Foley, Becker, Sauk Centre, Detroit Lakes, International Falls, East Grand Forks, La Crescent, Cokato, Wadena, West Concord, and Aitkin. Square footage of each library was divided by the population to get a square foot per capita figure. According to the calculations, the Milaca Community Library has the smallest number of square feet per capita at 0.19. The average among all the above-mentioned libraries, including Milaca, is 0.66 square feet per capita and the range was from 0.19 square feet per capita (Milaca) to 1.89 square feet per capita (Detroit Lakes). For a graphical depiction, see appendix B.

⁴ All square footage data and listed number of materials were taken from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning, "1998 Minnesota Public Library Statistics & Directory," (Roseville, MN, 1998).

Among the East Central Regional Libraries, Milaca had the second lowest number of square feet per capita, above only the Lindstrom library at 0.18 square feet per capita. Average square feet per capita for the East Central Regional Library including Milaca and Lindstrom is 0.47 square feet per capita. The range was from 0.18 (Lindstrom) to 0.80 (Princeton). A graph of the data is shown in Appendix C.

Materials per capita

As perhaps a direct reflection of square footage, the amount of library materials per capita was also calculated. This was also based on the 1998 Minnesota Public Library Statistics and Directory numbers for total materials for each library divided by the size of the population.

For libraries serving populations of 7000 – 8000 people (using the same libraries mentioned above), Milaca again came in last with 1.05 materials per capita. The average for all of the libraries evaluated (including Milaca) is 2.73, and the range is from 1.05 (Milaca) to 5.98 (International Falls). See appendix D for details.

In terms of the East Central Regional Library System, Milaca was lowest at 1.05, with an average of 1.87, and a range of 1.05 (Milaca) to 2.77 (both Hinckley and Rush City). Appendix E contains graphical details.

ECRL materials distribution

The division of materials among the East Central Regional Libraries is based on library size and population. According to the ECRL headquarters in Cambridge, out of 40 books, the Milaca library gets 2. The only other libraries getting only 2 of the 40 are the Isle library, the McGregor library, and the ECRL Bookmobile. Thus only 5% of the total books at the ECRL are given to the Milaca library. The Milaca library services nearly 8000 people, which is approximately 5.4% of the ECRL service area.

Part III: New Library Considerations

Cost

Since it has been proposed by the Milaca Friends of the Library that the Milaca Community Library be expanded, cost is likely the most pressing issue among those involved. According to the 1998 Minnesota Public Library Statistics and Directory, 11 new libraries were constructed around the state of Minnesota within the last six years. Cost estimates were received from six of those libraries, and a

cost estimate was also received from the city of Wyoming, MN, which is researching construction of a new library. The lowest cost estimate given was \$84/sq. ft. in Spicer for a 3000 sq. ft. library in 1998, or \$252,000 for the projected total cost of the project. However, it should be noted that this was part of a combined building project which can often influence the cost of the project. The highest cost estimate was \$127/sq. ft. for a 14150 sq. ft. library in Redwood Falls, for a total cost of approximately \$1.8 million. The estimate given to the Wyoming Library Task Force during the fall 1999 was \$145/sq. ft. to construct a 10,000 sq. ft. library, for a total cost estimate of \$1.45 million. This estimate was done by Ron McGriff, a consulting librarian out of Braham, Minnesota.⁵

Space Needed

The current size of the Milaca Community Library, which was constructed in 1936, is 1490 sq. ft. As mentioned above, this is the smallest library serving a population of its size, and the second smallest library in the East Central Regional Library System.

The average square footage per capita for libraries that serve 7000-8000 residents is 0.66, which calculates out to 5139 sq. ft. (based on a population of 7787 residents – the Milaca service population), which is almost three and a half times the current size.

The average square footage per capita for the libraries in the East Central Regional Library System is 0.47, which calculates out to 3660 sq. ft (again based on a population of 7787). That is still almost two and a half times larger than the current Milaca library. That means that Milaca is significantly below average in size when looking at both the ECRL and libraries serving similar-sized populations.

A general size recommendation given for populations of 5,000 – 9,999 people is either 3550 sq. ft., or 0.7 sq. ft. per person, whichever is greater⁶. That calculates out to 5451 sq. ft (based on 7787 people).

Taking all this into account, it could be surmised that in order to be on par with other communities, Milaca would need a library of between 3660-5451 sq. ft. Taking into consideration the fact that the population is growing, it would be practical to lean toward a larger size in order to accommodate more potential future library users.

⁵ Ron McGriff, "Space Planning Information for the Proposed Wyoming Public Library," (September, 2000)

⁶ Public Library Association, "Guidelines for Determining Minimum Space Requirements," Interim Standards for Small Public Libraries, Guidelines Toward Achieving the Goals of Public Library Service, 1962.

ADA requirements

During construction of a new library, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III needs to be taken into consideration. Title III regulation covers public accommodations (i.e. restaurants, hotels, theaters, stores, hospitals, museums, libraries, etc.), commercial facilities, and private entities that offer certain examinations and courses related to educational and occupational certification. Construction guidelines related to title III have been issued by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board. A summary of these guidelines are as follows⁷:

- At least 50% of all public entrances must be available and accessible to those with handicaps.
- Every public and common use bathroom must be handicap-accessible. Only one stall must be accessible, unless there are 6 or more stalls, in which case 2 must be accessible.
- One accessible public phone must be provided for each floor.
- In libraries, all public areas must be accessible. In addition, 5% of fixed tables or study carrels (or at least 1) must be available. At least one lane at the checkout area and aisles between card catalogs, magazine displays, and stack must be accessible.
- An accessible route must connect accessible public transportation stops, parking space, and public streets/sidewalks to an accessible building entrance.
- At least 1 of every 8 parking spaces must have adequate adjacent space for a van lift to be deployed.
- Maximum reach height should be 48 inches for card catalogs and magazine displays.
- For stacks, the minimum clear aisle width between them needs to be at least 42 inches. Shelf stack height is unrestricted.
- For 1-25 parking spaces in lot, at least 1 spot must be handicapped accessible. For 26-50 spots, 2 spaces must be handicapped accessible.

Interpretation of findings

From the information collected, it is apparent that the Milaca Community Library is small for the population it serves. Looking at both libraries serving similar sized populations, and other libraries within the East Central Regional Library

⁷ U. S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, The Americans with Disabilities Act: Title III Technical Assistance Manual, November 1993.

system, square footage per capita and materials per capita were examined, and both show that the Milaca Community Library is inferior in both categories.

If a new library were to be constructed, the cost factor is most likely to be a concern within the community. Through the community survey discussed later, the population's support was estimated, and a general idea of what sort of financial support can be expected was made. In addition, information on grants in the state of Minnesota was collected by the research assistant for further investigation by the Friends of the Library.

Aside from cost, size is the next biggest question. How large should a new library be? By looking at other libraries and how well they are serving their populations, the amount of space needed to contain an appropriate number of materials was estimated. The community survey also attempted to determine what resources members of the community would like to see in a library, in order to determine what structures and resources should be included if a new library is to be built.

Last, in constructing a new library, there is legislation that must be considered in order to make the library accessible to all. Key points of the legislation are discussed above in the ADA section. Architects are required to have a working knowledge of laws regarding accessibility, and will be able to further deal with those accommodations.

Part IV: Survey Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the community survey was to determine awareness and attitudes of those living in the areas served by the Milaca Community Library. Information was collected regarding current use of the library, use of other libraries, and attitudes regarding a new/expanded library in the city of Milaca as well as opinions on funding of that expansion.

Population of Interest

The population of interest for the library needs assessment survey was residents of the areas of Milaca, Pease, Foreston, Bock, Hayland Township, Bogus Brook Township, Borgholm Township, Page Township, Milo Township, Dailey and Mudgett Townships. The survey was designed to reach residents of all of those areas, regardless of race, age, gender, education level, and employment status. We also wanted to reach residents that both owned and rented their property.

Survey Period

The survey was conducted between November 10 and December 20, 2000. The Thanksgiving holiday did occur during this period, and calls were not made between November 22 and 25 due to the likelihood that residents would either be away from their homes, or have no time to complete the survey.

Design of Survey

The survey was conducted by phone in order to reach the most people in the shortest amount of time, as well as to be more cost-effective, as all of the surveys were done by one surveyor. A random sample of the population was used, therefore getting results representative of the population as a whole.

Development of Questions

The questions were developed to determine the following:

- Had the resident ever used the Milaca Community Library? An affirmative response would not necessarily mean a respondent has a library card, or uses it on a regular basis, but might indicate how many people have actually stepped inside for one reason or another.
- How many times had the resident gone to the Milaca Community Library in the last year? This was asked to determine how many were regular users, seasonal users, or those who had not been within the past year. 12 months was determined to be a valid time frame for this question.
- The types of resources individuals use at the Milaca Community Library – to find out which resources are most popular and most commonly used. The list was developed by the research assistant and the librarian.
- Respondent's rating of the number of materials in the library.
- Respondent's rating of the size of the library building.
- Use of interlibrary loan – to determine how many people are not finding the books they want at the Milaca Community Library, and how many are using the East Central Regional Library loan program.
- Overall satisfaction level with the Milaca Community Library, using a scale of very satisfied (1), somewhat satisfied (2), somewhat dissatisfied (3), and very dissatisfied (4).

- Services that a resident expects a library to provide – not specific to the Milaca Community Library, what resources do residents expect from their library? This data was compiled by the research assistant, supervisor, and librarian.
- Use of libraries outside of the community area – to determine how many library users are going outside of Milaca and why. Is it because other libraries have better selections, programs, and accommodations, or for convenience purposes?
- What other community services were used while the patron was in another town, using another library? This was asked in order to determine what business was potentially being lost by people going elsewhere for library purposes.
- Does the respondent support of the idea of expanding the Milaca Community Library?
- Would the respondent consider the possibility of making a donation? This question was asked to find out how many people would consider this option to fund a library expansion. The question was whether they'd consider making a one-time donation, which should not be construed as a commitment to do so.
- Would the respondent support a levy/tax increase? This was asked to determine how many people would consider these options in order to determine if it would be worth proposing.
- Demographic information – age, gender, and city/township of residence, to determine of the study sample represented the population.

Sampling Design

The survey sample was a random sample retrieved from the most recent copy of the Milaca area telephone directory. Three sections of the phone book were used. One section listed phone numbers from Askov, Finlayson, Garrison, Isle, Malmo, McGrath, Milaca, Onamia, Pease, and Wahkon. An unbiased party chose a number from 1-10, and chose 7. The (7) seventh resident starting from the beginning was chosen, and every (10) tenth residence from that resident was selected. Only those residential numbers that listed Milaca or Pease as the city of residence were telephoned, or those that began with a 983 or 369 prefix. It was determined that Milaca was often listed as the city of residence in the phone book when in truth the resident lived in another township such as Hayland, Milo, or Bogus Brook. All others were not polled because they were not in what was determined to be the service area of the Milaca Community Library (the

population of interest). The same process was repeated for the pages in the phone book listing the towns of Foreston and Bock.

The lists were gone through once, and every tenth residence was selected. That yielded approximately 900 numbers total. Of those 900 numbers, many were in cities not within the population of interest, or were places of business. That reduced the number calls to approximately 300. All of those numbers were called, however several were disconnected or otherwise unavailable. Each valid number was called, and those residents that were not home or not available were attempted an additional time, until the 100 survey mark was reached. Several residences were never available to be polled because residents were not home, the line was busy, or it was never a good time to take a survey.

Of those residents reached, 100 completed surveys. There were approximately 75 declines. That is a response rate of 57%.

Data Collection

Surveys were attempted Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings from 7pm – 9pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am – 5pm. Data collection during those days was intermittent depending on the availability of the research assistant. Calls were made during the week from the home of the research assistant, and on Saturdays from the Milaca Community Library.

The research assistant identified herself as a student at the University of Minnesota working on a research project for the Milaca Friends of the Library. A member of the household over 18 was requested if the individual who answered the phone sounded younger than 18. On occasion, the phone was passed to a spouse or another family member within the household whom the person who answered the phone thought would have more interest in answering the survey. That could result in some bias because those that tend to use the library may have more interest in participating in the survey.

Records were kept as to which residences had completed a survey, had refused, what numbers were not available, and how many times a residence had been called.

Data Analysis

Survey results were coded and entered into a spreadsheet for later analysis. Once the survey was complete, the results were filtered to see how many people answered each way, and in some cases to cross-reference two questions to see relatedness. The results of the survey are discussed below.

Part V: Survey Results

Sample Size

At the beginning of the project, the goal was to get 150 surveys completed to account for 2% of the total population. As time progressed, it became apparent that the goal might be too ambitious for the time frame allowed. The goal was then reset at 100 surveys, which accounts for 1.3% of the population in the area. As soon as the 100 surveys were completed, the surveying efforts were stopped in order to start data analysis.

Response Rate

As mentioned earlier, there were 100 surveys completed, and approximately 75 declines. That is a completion rate of 57% of those who were reached. The refusal rate was 43%.

Of the 100 surveys that were done, one was not completed the entire way through due to a participant hangup. That survey was counted, but the fact that the survey was only half-completed was taken into account when data analysis was done.

Characteristics of Sample

Of the 100 people surveyed, 66% were female, and 34% were male. 10% were under 19, 28% were 20-39, 30% were 40-59, and 31% were 60 or over. Surveys were conducted with residents from Milaca, Bogus Brook, Borgholm, Hayland, Foreston, Bock, Page, Milo, and a few who didn't know which city or township they lived in.

Representativeness of the Sample

AGE

Using data from the Census Bureau regarding estimated population totals for Mille Lacs County in 1999, Table 1 shows an age comparison which was made between the sample and the estimated population to determine representativeness.

TABLE 1

Age	Sample %	Pop. Est. %
19 and under	10	31

20-39	28	22
40-59	30	26
60 and up	31	21

This indicates that the 19 and under age group was under-represented. There are several reasons for that – first and foremost, under 19 encompasses some very young ages that are not likely to answer the phone, and were not likely to be able to participate in the survey. Therefore, under-representation of that age group was to be expected.

The rest of the age groups are a bit over-represented to compensate for the under-representation of the youngest age group. However, they are relatively accurate, and reflect the fact that they are all similar in composition.

SEX

Again using data from the US Census Bureau, a comparison was made between the sample and the estimated population of Mille Lacs County for 1999 to determine representativeness. Table 2 shows the results.

TABLE 2

Sex	Sample %	Pop. Est. %
Male	34	49
Female	66	51

This indicates that females were over-represented and males were consequently under-represented. That could be due to many factors including sampling methods. It could also be due to the thought that females were more willing to participate in the survey than males, or that females were home more often during the hours the calling took place. Part of it could be that the 60 and over group was over-sampled, and it has been shown that females live longer than males.

LOCATION

Using 1998 US Census Bureau estimates, population estimates of the Milaca Community Library service area were found. We wanted to look at representativeness in terms of city or township as measured in Table 3.

TABLE 3

City/Township	Sample %	Pop. Est. %
Milaca	55	18
Milo	7	18
Pease	0	3
Page	4	8
Mudgett	0	2
Hayland	7	5
Bogus Brook	4	16

Borgholm	10	18
Dailey	0	3
Foreston	6	6
Bock	2	2

This information indicates that Milaca was over-represented significantly, Hayland slightly, and Milo, Pease, Page, Mudgett, Bogus Brook, Borgholm, and Daily under-represented. From the data collection/survey process, it was evident that a fair number of people were not certain of what city or township they lived in. Since during the survey the name "Milaca Community Library" was used, it is possible that survey participants were more prone to say they lived in Milaca if they were not sure of the actual location. Since Mudgett, Daily, and Pease represent such a small proportion of the total service area population, it is well within expectation to have under-represented those groups. However, it is important to take all this information into consideration when evaluating the survey results.

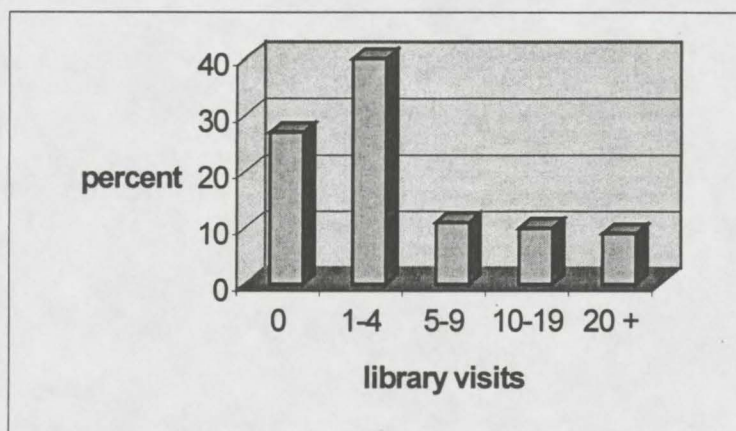
Survey Data

Use of the Milaca Community Library:

- 70 of the 100 people surveyed (70%) had been to the Milaca Community Library. 30 people said they had never been there.
- Of the 70 people who had been to the Milaca Community Library, 27% of them had not been to the library within the last 12 months.
- That means that 51% of the people surveyed had been to the Milaca Community Library at least once within the last 12 months.

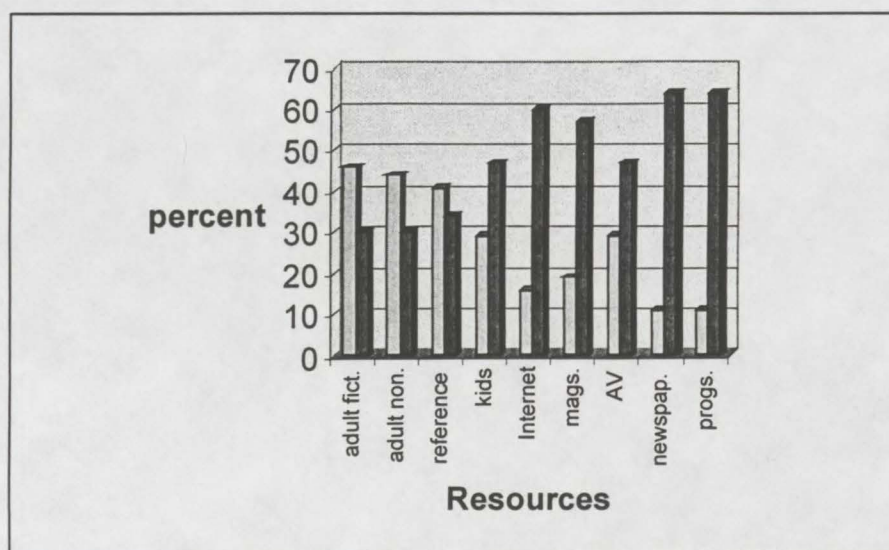
Of those 70 people who had been to the Milaca Community Library:

- 19 of them (27%) have not been in the last 12 months
- 28 of them (40%) had been 1-4 times in the last 12 months
- 8 of them (11%) had been 5-9 times in the last 12 months
- 7 of them (10%) had been 10-19 times in the last 12 months
- 6 (9%) had been over 20 times in the last 12 months
- 2 of them (3%) were not able to estimate how many times they'd been



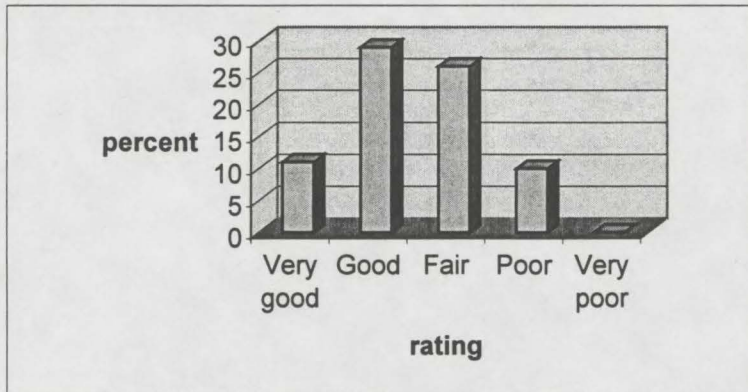
Resources used at the Milaca Community Library by those that had been there at least one time:

- 46% used adult fiction (30% did not)
- 44% used adult non-fiction (30% did not)
- 41% used reference materials (34% did not)
- 29% used kids books (47% did not)
- 16% had used the Internet (60% did not)
- 19% used magazines (57% did not)
- 29% used AV materials (47% did not)
- 11% used newspapers (64% did not)
- 11% used children's programs (64% did not)
- 24% of those that had been to the library had not been in a while and could not remember which resources they might have used.
- 3 people indicated additional resources they have used at the MCL – they were microfiche and tax forms.



Rating of the number of materials at the Milaca Community Library:

- 8 people (11%) said it was very good
- 20 people (29%) said it was good
- 18 people (26%) said it was fair
- 7 people (10%) said it was poor
- no one said it was very poor
- 24% did not rate it (17 people)

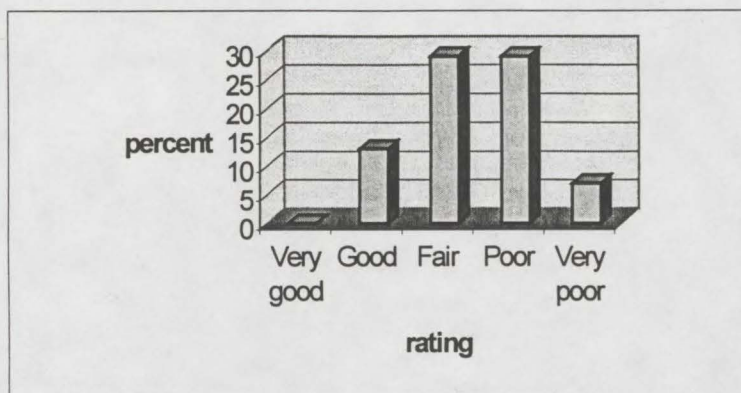


Interlibrary loan:

- Of the 70 people who had ever been to MCL, 37% had needed to order material from another library and had it delivered to them at MCL. 41% had not, and 21% were not able to answer.

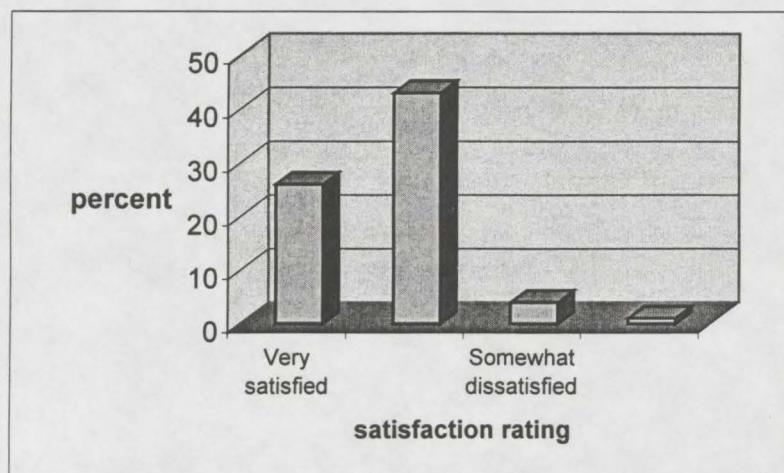
Rating of the size of the Milaca Community Library:

- nobody said it was very good
- 9 people (13%) said it was good
- 20 people (29%) said it was fair
- 20 people (29%) said it was poor
- 5 people (7%) said it was very poor
- 23% did not rate it (16 people)



Overall satisfaction with the Milaca Community Library:

- 18 people (26%) said they were very satisfied
- 30 people (43%) said they were somewhat satisfied
- 3 people (4%) said they were somewhat dissatisfied
- 1 person (1%) said they were very dissatisfied
- 26% (18 people) did not rate their satisfaction level



Expectations of a library in structure and function:

- 87 people (88%) said it would have newspapers (7% said no, 5% didn't know)
- 91 people (92%) said it would have magazines (4% no, 4% don't know)
- 89 people (90%) said it would have adult fiction and non-fiction (5% no, 5% don't know)
- 93 people (94%) said it would have reference books (1% no, 5% don't know)
- 95 people (96%) said it would have kids books (1% no, 3% don't know)
- 79 people (80%) said it would have internet access (11% no, 9% don't know)
- 76 people (77%) said it would have computer use (13% no, 10% don't know)
- 58 people (59%) said it would have a meeting room (33% no, 8% don't know)
- 87 people (88%) said it would have study areas (6% no, 5% don't know, 1% maybe)
- 76 people (77%) said it would have quiet rooms (14% no, 9% don't know)
- 84 people (85%) said it would have a kids' room (11% no, 4% don't know)

- 58 people (59%) said it would have adult programs (31% no, 10% don't know)
- 88 people (89%) said it would have kids' programs (5% no, 6% don't know)
- 11 of the respondents were able to come up with additional resources/services they would like a library to have. They are: AV materials, off-peak hours, craft books, religious books, courthouse documents, more collaboration with the community, more local-area newspapers, and of course, a librarian.

Use of libraries outside of the Milaca area:

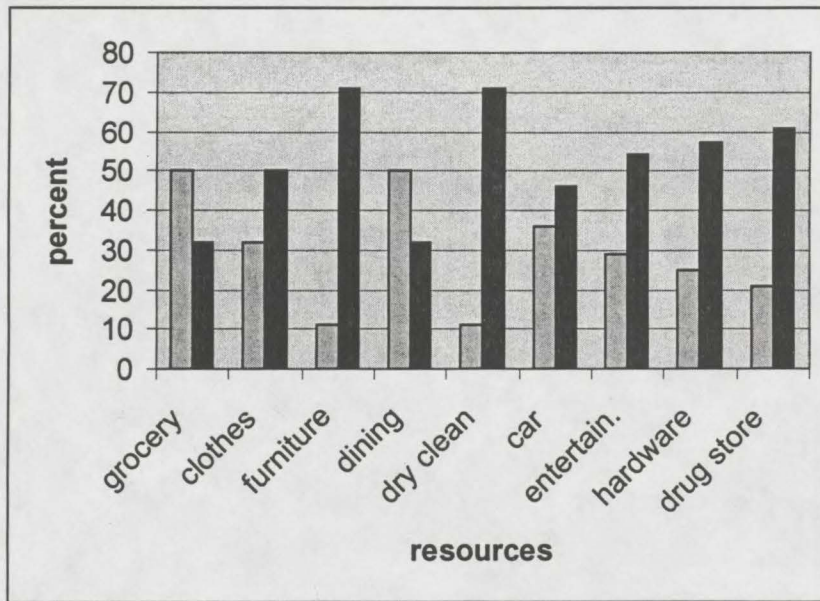
- 29 people (29%) of those surveyed had gone outside of Milaca to use a library.
- Libraries cited were: Mora, St. Cloud, Princeton, Cambridge, blind/handicapped library, Foley, Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Duluth, Isle, and a church library.

Of those 29 people, here are the reasons they cited for doing so:

- 18 people (62%) went for a better selection of materials (34% no, 3% don't know)
- 4 people (14%) went for a children's program (83% no, 3% don't know)
- 3 people (10%) went for an adult program (86% no, 3% don't know)
- 1 person (3%) went to use a meeting room (93% no, 3% don't know)
- 15 people (52%) were in the area for an unrelated reason (45% no, 3% don't know)
- 8 people cited reasons other than those the interviewer listed. They were: for a particular reference, laptop computer plug-ins, more internet access, different hours, more convenient, went with a friend, and a book sale.

When those 29 people went outside of Milaca to use a library, here are the other community services they used while they were there:

- 14 people (50%) went grocery shopping (32% no, 18% don't know)
- 9 people (32%) went clothes shopping (50% no, 18% don't know)
- 3 people (11%) went furniture shopping (71% no, 18% don't know)
- 14 people (50%) dined (32% no, 18% don't know)
- 3 people (11%) got dry cleaning done (71% no, 18% don't know)
- 10 people (36%) got car fueling/wash done (46% no, 18% don't know)
- 8 people (29%) went for entertainment (54% no, 18% don't know)
- 7 people (25%) went to a hardware store (57% no, 18% don't know)
- 6 people (21%) went to a drugstore (61% no, 18% don't know)
- 1 person used an additional resource used during a trip in which another library was used. That resource was dog grooming.

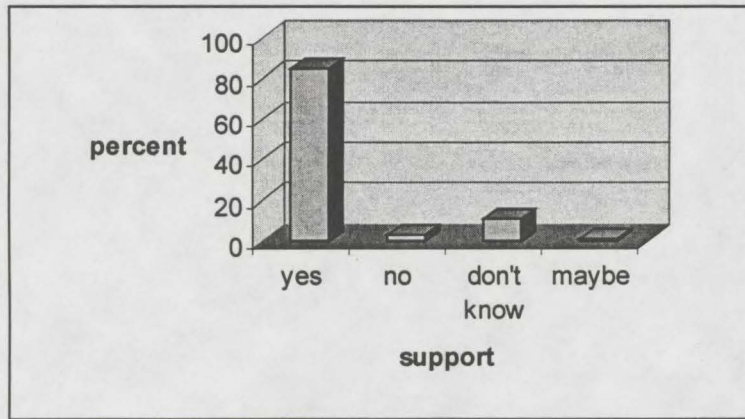


Perhaps more importantly, those 13 people that went outside of the Milaca area for library resources solely because of the better selection were examined further. Here is the breakdown of the community resources they used:

- Of those 13 people, 7 went grocery shopping (54%)
- Of those 13 people, 3 went clothes shopping (23%)
- Of those 13 people, 2 went furniture shopping (15%)
- Of those 13 people, 7 ate out (54%)
- Of those 13 people, 2 got dry cleaning done (15%)
- Of those 13 people, 5 got gas or a car wash (38%)
- Of those 13 people, 2 got entertainment/recreation (15%)
- Of those 13 people, 4 went to a hardware store (31%)
- Of those 13 people, 5 went to the drug store (38%)

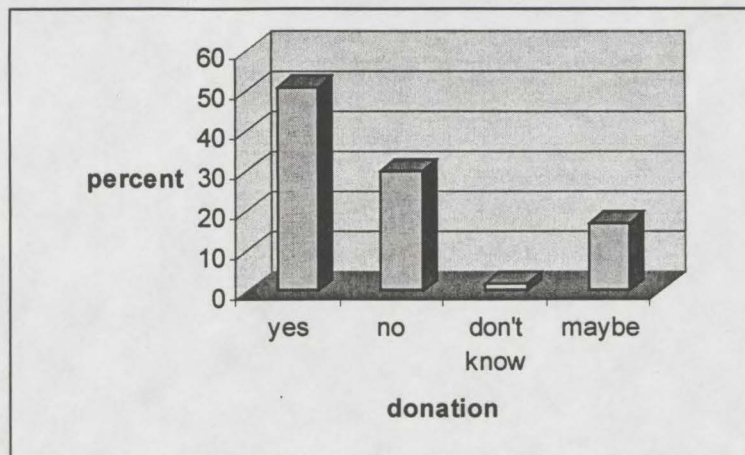
Support of Milaca Community Library expansion:

- Of the 99 people who had reached this point in the survey (1 hung up), 84 of them (85%) supported the idea of expanding the MCL. (3% no, 11% don't know, 1% maybe.)



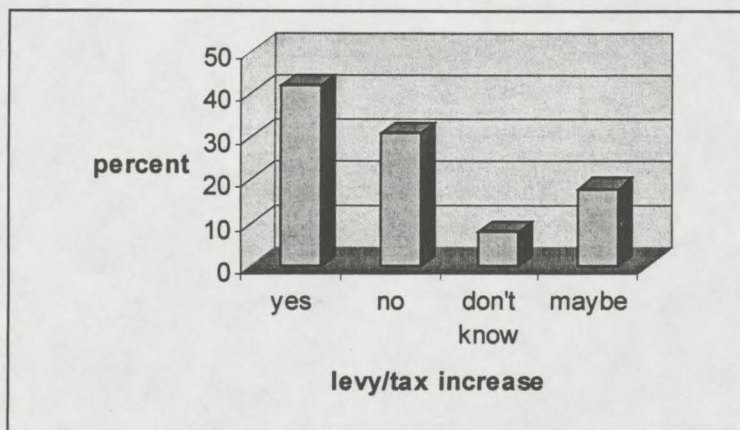
Willingness to make a donation in support of expansion:

- Of those 99 people, 50 of them (51%) would consider making a donation to support library expansion. (30% no, 2% don't know, 17% maybe.)



Willingness to support levy/tax increase to help fund expansion:

- Of those 99 people, 42 people (42%) would consider supporting a levy or small tax increase to support library expansion. (31% no, 8% don't know, 18% maybe.)



Participant comments

Several survey participants were interested in providing comments about the library in general, and several had qualifiers for questions they answered. Here is a list of comments and concerns library users (and non-users) had about the issues:

- One individual mentioned that the size of the library was a “disgrace” and voiced very firm support of the issues.
- Several people had issues with the question about rating the overall experience at the Milaca Community Library – they wanted to rate it on service vs. size. Many people expressed a high level of satisfaction for the level of help they received, but lowered their rating when asked to include all aspects of the library in their rating.
- A few people expressed concern over the current library hours – they felt that being open during the week over standard working hours did not allow for easy access for most of the population, and that Saturday morning were too limiting as well.
- One person surveyed said he would support the library expansion only if a new library was built rather than an expansion of the current building.
- One person suggested the Milaca Community Library and the school library combine forces.
- One individual was in support of a tax increase only if it were temporary.
- One individual felt there was no need to build a new library since the school library was just expanded recently.
- One individual would prefer that the avenue of expansion of the current building be looked at first before resorting to building a new library.
- One individual would support a tax increase only if a large majority of people were in support of it as well.
- A very common reason for saying no to supporting any type of funding was due to being a senior citizen on a fixed income.

Potential problems or biases

There are several areas where biases need to be considered when dealing with the results of the survey. The first is in the questions themselves. The questions were tested on uninvolved volunteers for suggestions, as well as the Minnesota Center for Survey Research. However, issues do arise as the survey is being given, and this survey was no exception. A few examples:

1. In questions 3 and 9, the terms "adult fiction" and "adult nonfiction" were used. A few people misinterpreted this to mean material of a pornographic or "adult" nature. For those that asked for clarification, it was given, however there may be others who responded without knowing the intended meaning of the term.
2. Question 9 seemed to be difficult for some – they misunderstood that the interviewer was asking what resources the Milaca Community Library has rather than what they would expect a library to have.
3. Questions 18 and 19 asked about funding a library expansion. They were to get an idea of the opinion of the community at this time, however some construed it as asking for a donation or immediate support. That was modified by adding a qualifier before asking the question – "The next two questions are about funding, but I am not asking for money, just for your opinion about financial support."

In general, the survey is dependent on the ability of the participant to recall things correctly, so there is the possibility that people did not remember things as they actually were, which could skew the results.

In terms of interpretation of the survey, since there were only 100 participants, there is the possibility that the margin of error could be larger. Smaller sample sizes tend to yield larger margins of error.

In addition, the sampling by nature excluded those without telephones in their homes, and those that were unlisted from the phone book by choice.

There is also the possibility that those that chose not to respond to the survey are different in makeup than those that did. Perhaps those individuals that did not participate are non-library users and are not in favor of library expansion. In that case, the sample will not reflect their opinions. The hope is that they are similar to those that did respond in all areas, such as age and sex, and would have answered the questions in the same way.

Because there was only one interviewer, there is no risk of interviewer interpretation – if two different people ask how a question should be interpreted, the interview answered the same way to both. With more than one interviewer,

there is the risk of having interviewers interpret the questions in different ways, which can affect the outcome of the survey.⁸

Interpretation of the survey results

While the discussion of potential problems and biases may cause the reader some alarm, it is not at all unusual to have sources of bias in all surveys that are done. There is no guarantee that the answers are correct, but if the proper precautions have been taken, the results can be viewed as representative of the population as a whole.

On a very general level, the survey indicates that people are using the library. Perhaps not on a regular basis, but they are going there to check out books, to look up information, or to use the internet. The overall feeling about the library is good - most people were satisfied with their experience overall; however, there were some lukewarm feelings about the size and number of materials contained in the Milaca Community Library. It was discovered that a rather significant portion of those surveyed had used other libraries, some due to the fact that other libraries may have had a better selection.

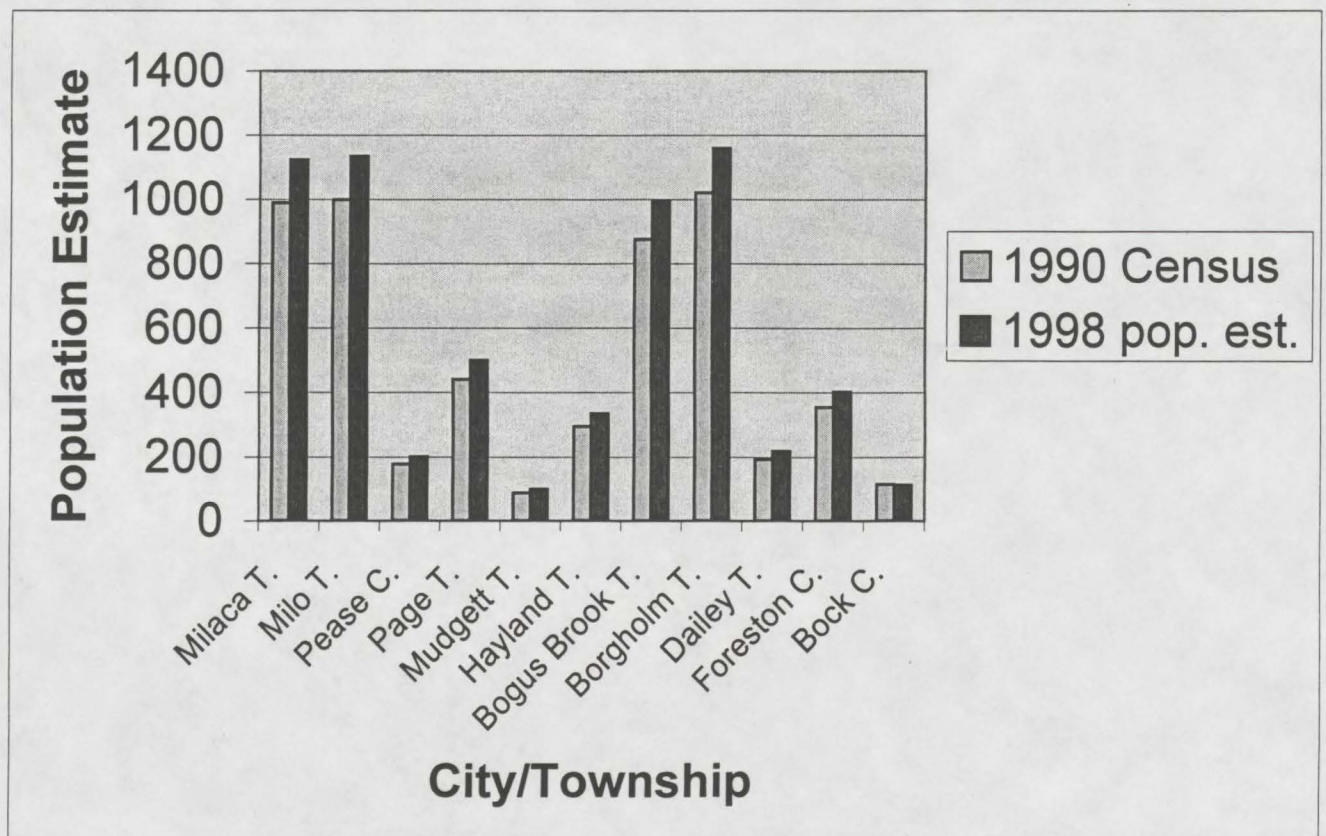
The level of support for the idea of a new library is very high. Very few people disagreed with the need for a new library, and there were just a few who were uncertain. The level of financial support is somewhat less than the number of people who support the idea of a new library, but that is probably to be expected.

People seemed aware of the proposal for a new library, and several mentioned fundraising events that had been going on, such as the collection of pennies at the school. The number of people who said they'd be willing to consider making a donation doesn't indicate much about it, but at least it gives an idea of the percentage of those that would consider it. There is no way to tell what amount of money people would consider donating, but even those on fixed incomes may be willing to participate in a "pennies for the library" type of event. The number of those that would consider supporting a levy or tax increase hovers around 50%. That may be a harder sell - there were several comments from those who said they wouldn't support it and that taxes are too high already. However, there were quite a few who were undecided on that issue, and the question was very general. The opinions of people may change as they find out how much the increase would be - they may be surprised at how much or how little that would add to their taxes.

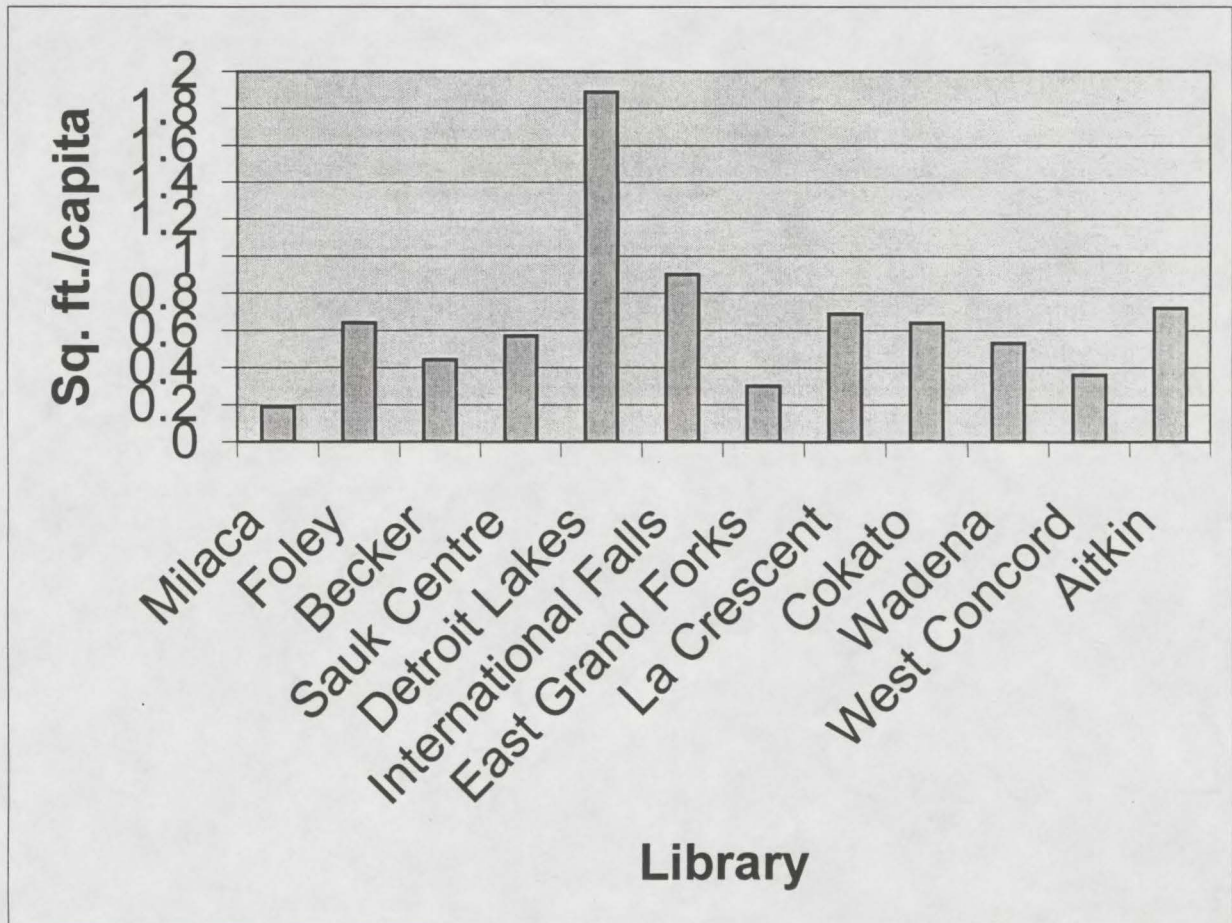
In conclusion, people are relatively satisfied with the current library, however most support construction of a new library and expressed pleasure with the idea of having more resources at their disposal.

⁸ Sallant and Dillman, How to Conduct your own Survey, (New York: Wiley and Sons), 19.

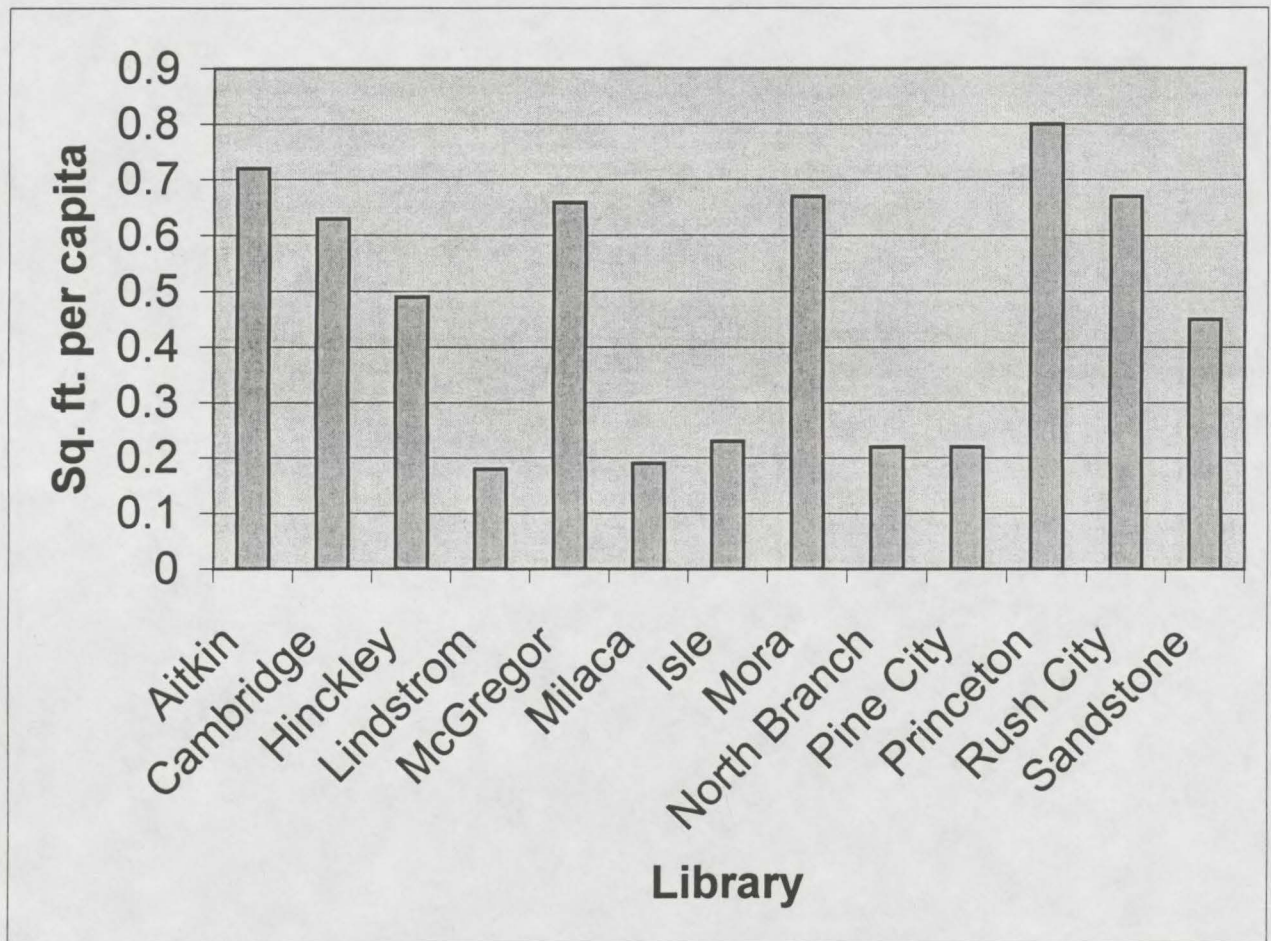
Appendix A – Population Changes in the Milaca Area



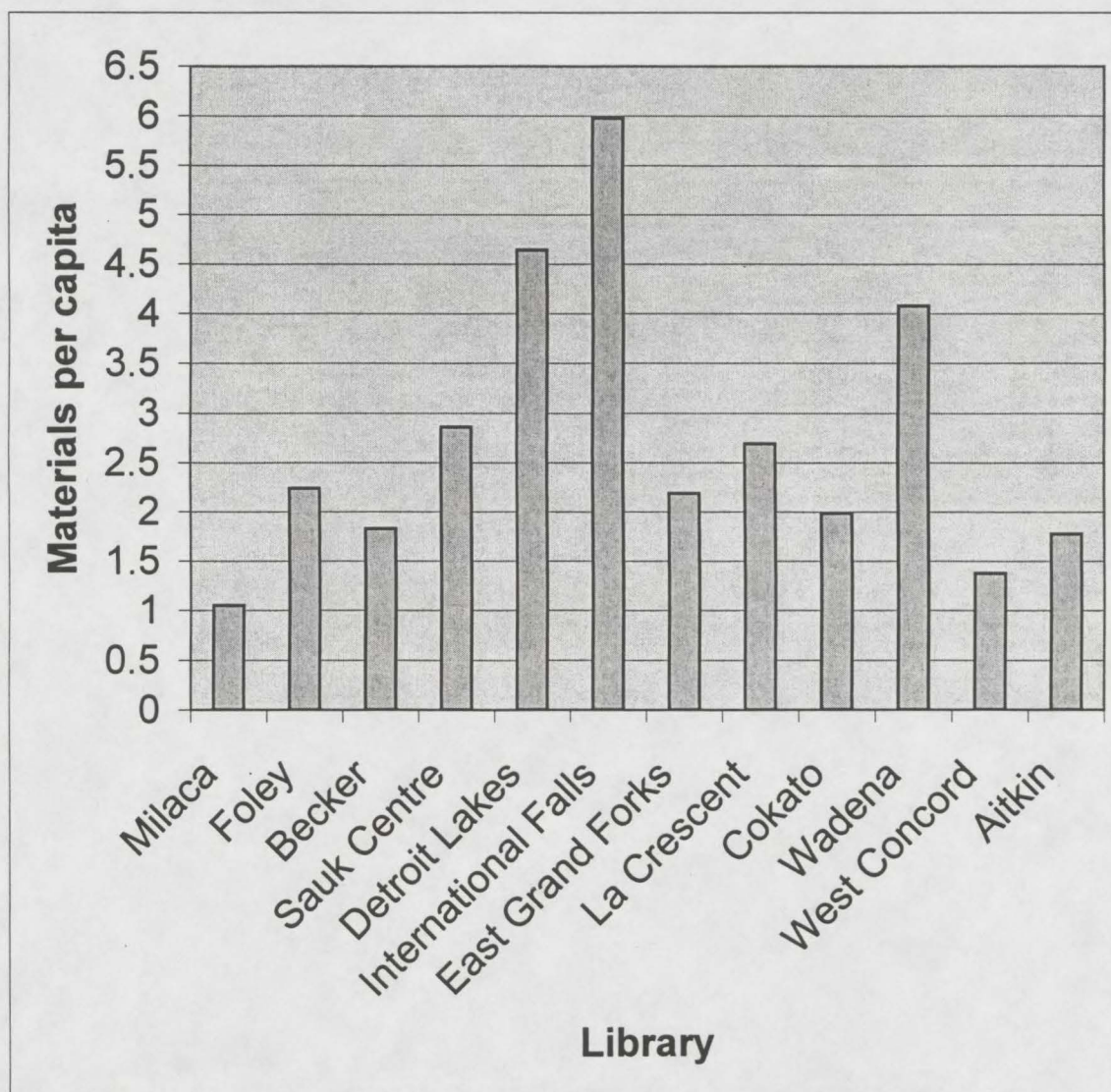
Appendix B – 7-8K sq. ft. per capita



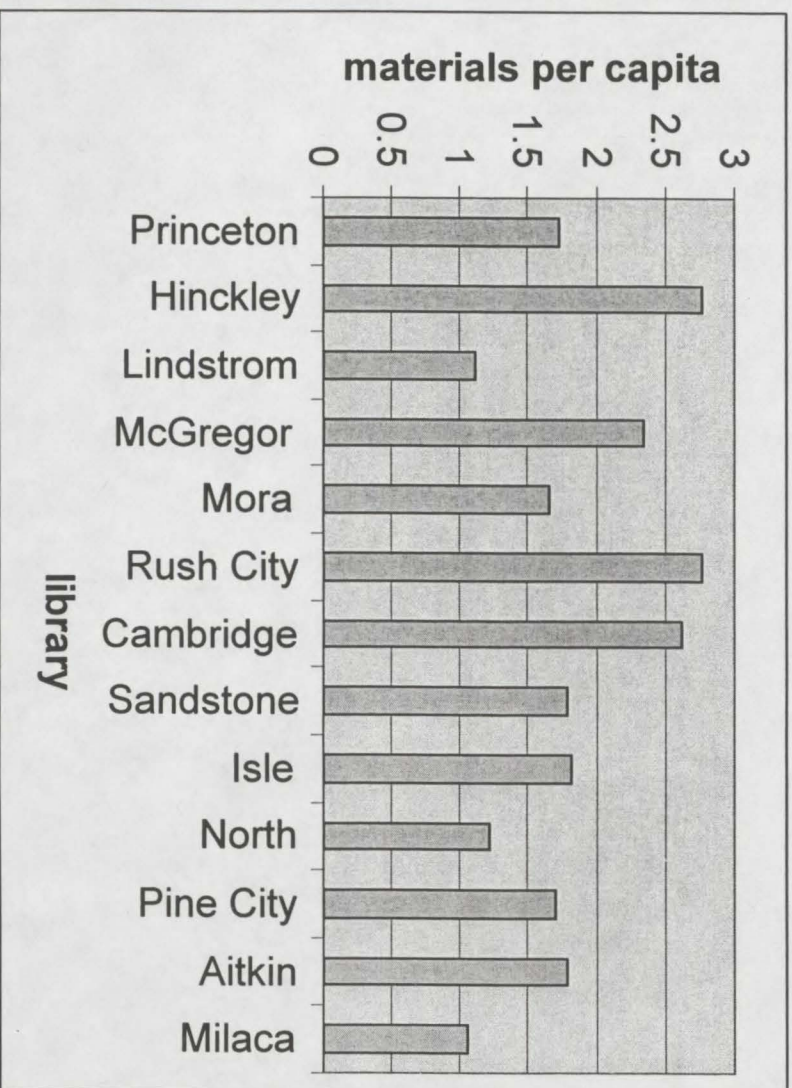
Appendix C – ECRL sq. ft. per capita



Appendix D – 7-8K materials per capita



Appendix E – ECRL materials per capita



Appendix F – Library Needs Assessment Survey

Milaca Library Use

I am going to start by asking you a few questions about the Milaca Community Library.

1. Have you ever used the Milaca community library? (If no, skip to question 7.)

1. Yes 2. No (8. Don't know)

2. In the last 12 months, please estimate about how many times you've attended the Milaca Community Library:

3. Now I am going to read a series of resources you may use at the Milaca Community Library. After each statement, please say "yes" if this is a resource you use at the Milaca Community Library, or "no" if this is not a resource you use at that library.

Adult fiction	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Adult non-fiction	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
References	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Children's books	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Internet use	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Periodicals	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Audiovisual materials	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Newspapers	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Children's Programs	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know

4. Are there any other resources you use at the Milaca Community Library that were not mentioned in the previous question?

1. Yes 2. No

4a. If yes, what are they?

5. How would you rate the number of materials at the Milaca Community Library?

1. Very Good 2. Good 3. Fair 4. Poor 5. Very Poor (8. Don't know)

6. Have you ever needed to order materials from **another** library and had them delivered to the Milaca Community Library for your use?

1. Yes 2. No

7. How would you rate the size of the Milaca library building?

1. Very Good 2. Good 3. Fair 4. Poor 5. Very Poor (8. Don't know)

8. In general, how satisfied are you with your overall experience with the Milaca Community Library?

1. Very Satisfied
2. Somewhat Satisfied
3. Somewhat Dissatisfied
4. Very Dissatisfied
(8. Don't know)

9. I am going to read a list of services you may expect a library to provide. After each statement, please say "yes" if it is something you expect a library to provide, or "no" if it is not a service you expect a library to provide.

Newspapers	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Periodicals	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Adult literature	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Reference materials	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Children's materials	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Internet access	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Computer use	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Meeting room(s)	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Study areas	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Quiet rooms	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Children's room	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know

Adult programs	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Children's programs	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know

10. Is there anything else you would expect a library to provide that was not mentioned in the previous question?

1. Yes 2. No

10a. If yes, please tell us what other services you would expect a library to provide.

Use of other libraries

Now I am going to switch gears and ask you a few questions about library use outside of the Milaca area.

11. In the past 12 months, have you gone outside of the Milaca area for library resources? (If no, skip to #17.)

1. Yes 2. No (8. Don't know)

12. What library or libraries did you use?

13. I am going to read a series of reasons why you might go outside of the Milaca area for library use. If it is a reason why you went outside of the Milaca area to use the library, say yes, if it is not, say no.

Better selection of materials	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Children's library program	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Adult library program	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
To use a meeting room	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
You were in the area for an unrelated reason	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know

14. Is there any other reason you went outside of the Milaca area for library use?

1. Yes 2. No

14a. If yes, what are the reasons you went outside of the Milaca area for library use?

15. If you have used the other library, what other community services have you used while you are in that area? I will read a series of options. Say yes if you have used the service while in the area to use the library, no if you have not.

Grocery shopping	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Clothes shopping	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Furniture shopping	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Dining	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Dry cleaning	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Car fueling or wash	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Entertainment or Recreation	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Hardware store	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know
Drug store	1. Yes 2. No	8. Don't know

16. Is there any other community service that you have used while outside of the Milaca area to use the other library, which was not mentioned in the previous question?

1. Yes 2. No (8. Don't know)

16a. If yes, what other community services have you used while in other communities to use the library?

Library expansion

Now I am going to switch topics a bit. It has been proposed that the Milaca library be expanded to increase square footage and services such as number of books and study areas.

17. Do you agree or disagree with the idea of expanding the Milaca Community Library?

1. Agree 2. Disagree

There are many different ways to fund a library expansion, such as grants, donations, community fund drives, local tax increases, etc.

18. Would you be willing to *consider* making a one-time donation to support library expansion?

1. Yes 2. No (8. Don't know) (9. Maybe)

19. Would you be willing to *consider* supporting something such as a levy or small tax increase in order to help fund the expansion of the Milaca library?

1. Yes 2. No (8. Don't know) (9. Maybe)

Demographic information

20. What city or township are you from? _____

21. Age range:

1. Under 19
2. 20-39
3. 40-59
4. Over 60

22. Gender:

1. Male 2. Female